



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond  
September 23-27, 2013*

## Thousands take part in Walk for Reconciliation in Vancouver

[Metro](#)

September 23, 2013

Elizabeth Hames



*Elizabeth Hames/Metro Thousands of people march down Georgia Street as part of Sunday's Walk for Reconciliation.*

Decades after a state-sanctioned campaign to erase First Nations culture from Canadian society, 70,000 aboriginals and non-aboriginals alike paraded through the Vancouver during Sunday's Walk for Reconciliation, banging drums, sporting button blankets, and singing traditional songs.

The walk marked the end of a weeklong gathering of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which is tasked with documenting the often traumatic experiences of Aboriginal students at Canada's former Indian Residential Schools.

Vancouver's TRC Week saw residential school survivors, their children and grandchildren providing testimony for the historical record.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip says reconciliation is inextricably linked to protecting Mother Earth

[Straight.com](http://Straight.com)

September 22, 2013

Charlie Smith



*Grand Chief Stewart Phillip says First Nations and their allies won't hesitate to protect the land. Charlie Smith*

Today's historic [Walk for Reconciliation](#) in Vancouver was billed as a means "to transform and renew the very essence of relationships among Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians".

But according to [Grand Chief Stewart Phillip](#) of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, reconciliation must also be about protecting the environment for future generations.

"Those that understand that we need to defend Mother Earth and embrace sustainable development need to step up and embrace the challenges of the future,"

Phillip told the *Georgia Straight* while walking along West Pender Street. "It's not merely a warm, fuzzy social movement. Reconciliation will have purpose—and that purpose will be to defend Mother Earth for future generations."

Thousands turned up for the walk, which featured keynote speaker Bernice King, daughter of slain civil-rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

King spoke about human dignity, self-respect, historical oppression, and the importance of nonviolence, but never once commented on environmental issues.

Phillip, on the other hand, spoke bluntly about "this insane path that we're currently on with respect to fossil fuels and development that has actually no consideration or respect for the adverse impacts it will have on the environment [and] on water".

"I think this country and the province of British Columbia are quickly heading for the watershed moment where we're all being challenged with taking a stand on what the future will hold for our children, our grandchildren, and our grandchildren's grandchildren," he said.

Phillip claimed that the Harper government is "obsessed with ramming through \$650 billion worth of large-scale resource development projects, again with no consideration for the environment".

He spoke specifically about the proposed Enbridge and Kinder Morgan pipelines, alleging that the federal government has embarked on an "offensive" that is designed to lay the groundwork for declaring these projects in the national interest.

"They're making an effort to establish a consultation record that they will rely on when these matters shift to the courts," Phillip said. "They're going to mislead the general public—deliberately mislead the general public—and suggest that after this intense period of consultation the vast majority of Canadians and British Columbians and First Nations are supporting these pipeline projects, which is clearly not the case. So we're heading for serious conflict in the province of British Columbia. There is no question about that."

When asked if this could lead to direct action, Phillip replied: "If necessary, I don't think there will be any hesitation on the part of First Nations and our allies to get involved and protect the land."

## Government of Canada Launches Open Government Web Tool to Share Information on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights

[Canada NewsWire](#)

Sept. 23, 2013

FORT MCMURRAY, AB, Sept. 23, 2013 /CNW/ - Provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal groups, industry and all Canadians will now have access to an online repository of information on Aboriginal and treaty rights previously only available to federal officials.

The Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, announced the launch of the new web tool ([aandc.gc.ca/atris](http://aandc.gc.ca/atris)) at the opening of the Northern Development Minister's Forum today.

"In the spirit of accountability and transparency, our Government is committed to making government information more accessible to Canadians," said Minister Valcourt. "This web tool will enable people across Canada to access information on potential and established Aboriginal and treaty rights from coast to coast to coast."

The [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System](#) (ATRIS) is a web-based information system intended to map out the location of Aboriginal communities across Canada and to display information pertaining to their potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights. ATRIS provides users with information on treaties, agreements and claims processes and links it to a geographic location or an Aboriginal group on a map. This system will prove enormously helpful to all levels of government and to industry across Canada in determining any consultation obligations with Aboriginal groups.

The Crown has a legal [duty to consult](#) and, if appropriate, accommodate when contemplating activities or initiatives that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal and treaty rights. The development of a repository of information on established or potential Aboriginal and treaty rights was a key commitment under the Government of Canada's 2007 [Action Plan on Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation](#).

A previous version of ATRIS was made accessible internally to all Government of Canada departments and agencies in December 2011. The launch of the new and improved ATRIS, on the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website, supports the Government of Canada's plan for [Responsible Resource Development](#) and more effective consultation processes by making key information accessible to provincial and territorial officials, industry, Aboriginal people and all Canadians.

Go to the [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System \(ATRIS\)](#)

Fixing aboriginal wealth gap urged

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

September 22, 2013

Camille Bains





*Rev. Bernice King (CP)*

VANCOUVER -- The daughter of American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. says economic injustice must be addressed as part of the reconciliation process with Canada's First Nations people.

Rev. Bernice King said a history of pain and abuse can't be erased with an apology, and money for programs won't undo the suffering that can take generations to overcome.

"We still suffer in America, as an African-American community," she told reporters on Saturday, referring to the lingering effects of slavery and oppression.

King, 50, said her maternal great-grandmother was part-Cherokee and there is Indian ancestry on her father's side as well.

On Sunday, the Baptist minister is to deliver the keynote address at the start of a walk for reconciliation related to Canada's residential school system.

A weeklong gathering of the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission includes a recording of stories from former students and their families.

King was introduced Saturday by Karen Joseph, executive director of Reconciliation Canada, who said her appearance at the event is especially meaningful this year, during the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

King said she spent some time on Saturday with Joseph and her father, Chief Robert Joseph of the Gwawaneuk First Nation on Vancouver Island, to learn about the horrific impact of the Indian residential school system on First Nations people.

"I'm a little numb right now," King said, adding she felt helpless hearing about the atrocities suffered by young children who were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to government-funded, church-run schools, where many endured physical and sexual abuse.

"The manner in which people, human beings, have been treated, it's inexcusable," King said.

However, she said society as a whole must take responsibility for past wrongs and take steps to envision a different future.

"The reality is that although you have a historical context you also have current policies and behaviour and attitudes that kind of reinforce the pain."

King said reconciliation of past wrongs will bring healing, but empowering people with economic opportunities is the key to their well-being.

"My father, if you study his life's work, was in the midst of addressing economic injustice. In fact, he saw economic injustice as inseparable twins and so he spent the last three years of his life really raising the issue and talked about it during the poor people's campaign that he was crusading for when he was assassinated in Memphis."

"So going forward, there have to be opportunities made to truly empower First Nations people. That's the same struggle we face, a little bit different from theirs, in America."

King said she has a tough time grappling with the suffering of people that continues all over the world.

"We've created, as my father said, this wonderful house, this wonderful neighbourhood, but we have not found a way to create a brother and sisterhood. And if we don't, we're going to perish together as fools."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission events in Vancouver are part of the sixth of seven national gatherings to inform Canadians about the residential school system through testimonies from former students and their families.

-- The Canadian Press

## Mi'kmaq assembly to consult with members

[Western Star](#)

September 24, 2013

CORNER□BROOK — The Mi'kmaq First Nations Assembly of Newfoundland will be consulting with its membership and legal counsel over the coming days in regards to future legal action as the group continues to fight for the fair treatment of applicants and members of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band.

The assembly, formerly the Qalipu Watchdogs, was formed in response to a decision by the band and the federal government not to assess some 70,000 applications to the band using the original terms of reference for the process. The majority of those unprocessed applications were received prior to a November 2012 deadline to apply.

The federal government and the band signed a supplemental agreement in July under which all applications, pending and those already approved, will be considered using a different criteria.

Following that announcement the Mi'kmaq First Nation Assembly retained the law firm Gowling to conduct a legal review of the supplemental agreement. The group met with its legal counsel in Corner Brook last Friday to discuss that review. Gowling is one of the largest law firms in Canada and has experience in all aspects of aboriginal law.

Kill Northern Gateway now, First Nations leaders say amid ad campaign

[Globe and Mail](#)

Sep. 23 2013, 11:08 PM EDT



*The Exxon Valdez oil spill March 24, 1989 Stock price: \$11.28 before; \$10.50 after the event "I feel this a heck of a lot. I've been disappointed and angry since March 24, 1989. □...In the future, we have to be a lot more sensitive. [The \$1.1-billion settlement with the U.S. government] will not have a significant effect on our earnings." - Exxon chairman Lawrence G. Rawl (AP)*

Coastal First Nations in British Columbia have aimed an anti-oil tanker campaign directly at Prime Minister Stephen Harper in an apparent attempt to counter a federal push to get aboriginal leaders onside with resource development in the West.

[A video featuring a Simon & Garfunkel song](#), *The Sound of Silence*, and dramatic images of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound, Alaska, in 1989, all

builds to the message: "British Columbians have spoken. Will Stephen Harper listen?"

The ad was released Monday on television and YouTube as deputy ministers from five federal departments met in Vancouver with First Nations leaders in what is seen as the biggest effort yet by Ottawa to smooth the way for energy projects proposed in B.C.

Art Sterritt, executive director of Coastal First Nations, an alliance of aboriginal groups, said the meetings taking place Monday and Tuesday could lead to a breakthrough in relations between native organizations and the federal government.

But that won't happen, he said, until Ottawa takes the Enbridge Northern Gateway proposal off the table.

"There's no doubt they'll get the message that Northern Gateway is dead. If they don't get that out of the way we don't need to talk about anything else," said Mr. Sterritt.

He said although First Nations in B.C. are taking a hard line on the Enbridge proposal, they are open discussing other energy projects – particularly liquefied natural gas.

"They are going to be told there is room for a relationship ... and they really do need to get involved in perhaps providing loan guarantees, for example ... [to] help First Nations buy large portions of [LNG] pipeline projects," he said.

Mr. Sterritt said the ad campaign, which is similar to one unveiled earlier this year to coincide with the anniversary of the Exxon Valdez accident, is aimed at Mr. Harper because First Nations are convinced the pipeline proposed by Enbridge will ultimately be his call.

"The decision has now moved from the joint review panel to Harper. That's where it lies," said Mr. Sterritt.

He said he believes that Mr. Harper wants to see the Enbridge project go through, but has got the message through his new energy adviser, B.C. lawyer Douglas Eyford, that that's unlikely to happen given aboriginal opposition.

"I think Eyford has sobered them up a little bit. That's why we are seeing all these [deputy ministers] out here. They are realizing they need to have a relationship with us before any projects can go through," said Mr. Sterritt.



He said he couldn't remember First Nations ever meeting with such a large group of deputies before and it underscores the newfound urgency Ottawa is putting on its relationship with B.C. aboriginal groups.

"There's never been a group of deputies come out like this before. Never happened," he said. "I think Eyford told the Prime Minister there is no relationship out here and you've got to build one. I also think the Prime Minister realizes Northern Gateway is dead and that they need to take this time to build relationships [so other developments can proceed]."

Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver, the federal government lead on the pipeline debate, wasn't immediately available for comment.

But Christopher McCluskey, a ministry spokesman, said in an e-mail the government "aren't the proponents of any commercial proposal (EG, Enbridge)."

He added that the meetings in B.C. are meant to encourage First Nation participation in projects in general but they are not specifically related to oil and gas.

"We are ... constructively working with FN to achieve market access. In terms of what that would look like and when ... [that's to be determined]," he wrote.

The Coastal First Nations ad release comes just a week after the Canadian Chamber of Commerce launched a public campaign supporting the construction of new oil and gas pipelines.

## Research Into Aboriginal Perspectives Leads to Documentary, New Curriculum and Policy Insight

[Marketwired](#)

September 24, 2013

EDMONTON, ALBERTA--(Marketwired - Sept. 24, 2013) - Today, Alberta Innovates - Energy and Environment Solutions (AI-EES) and the Native Counselling Services of Alberta released outcomes of a three-year research project focused on Aboriginal perspectives on water. The project, entitled, The Sacred Relationship, features a documentary film, grade five and six educational curriculum and research that provides a policy framework for rebuilding relationships.

"Guided by a circle of Cree Elders and led by a team of Aboriginal and Western Scientists, The Sacred Relationship explores how reconciling the relationship between Aboriginal people and the rest of Canada can lead to healthier water," says Dr. Patti LaBoucane-Benson, the project's Principal Investigator.

"I think water is an issue where the Aboriginal community and scientific community can find common ground for discussion ... it is something we all can stand behind," says Dr. Alexander Zehnder, Scientific Director of Water Resources, AI-EES.

The documentary film, *Water - The Sacred Relationship* is a result of research and ceremony with Cree Elders as well as interviews and talking circles with Indigenous and Western Water Scientists. From this research Dr. LaBoucane-Benson developed a model to represent an interconnected worldview that demonstrates the importance of building and repairing relationships.

The peer reviewed research paper describes the worldview and sacred relationship of the Cree people in Alberta, as well as how colonial policy has created despair in Aboriginal communities as well as a state of disconnectedness from the water. The study concludes with the presentation of a framework for the development of policies that seek to repair the relationship between Aboriginal people and mainstream society.

The Sacred Relationship brings Aboriginal worldview into the classrooms of grade five and six students across Canada. A new curriculum developed as part of this project provides teachers with downloadable, easy-to-teach lesson plans based on series of fifteen educational videos. The videos feature perspectives on water from Aboriginal Elders, leaders and Western Scientists. Teachers can access:

- Grade five Science - Wetland Eco-Systems: eleven lesson plans and six online videos
- Grade five Social Studies - Histories and Stories of Ways of Life in Canada: four lesson plans and four online videos
- Grade six Science - Evidence and Investigation: three Lesson Plans and three Online Videos
- Grade six Social Studies - Citizens Participating in Decision Making: One Lesson Plan and One Online Video

## ABOUT AI-EES

Alberta Innovates - Energy and Environment Solutions (AI-EES) is the lead agency for energy and environmental research in Alberta. It is a catalyst to promote the development of innovative, integrated ways to convert Alberta's natural resources into market-ready, environmentally responsible energy and the sustainable management of Alberta's water resources. AI-EES brings together decision makers from government, industry and the resource community, as well as research and technology organizations, to develop solutions for the biggest challenges facing Alberta's energy and environment sectors.

Fortune Minerals (T.FT) pulls out of B.C. mine as First Nations protest

## [Stockhouse](#)

September 24, 2013

VANCOUVER - A Canadian mining company is moving to diffuse a growing dispute with First Nations groups over a proposed open pit coal mine in northern B.C., by pulling out of the mine site for several months.

However, Fortune Minerals ([TSX:T.FT](#), [Stock Forum](#)) said it is not leaving Mount Klappan for good, and that the company remains committed to the mine in an area considered sacred by First Nations.

"While all of Fortune's activities at the project site are focused on gathering necessary information that will be used in a B.C. environmental assessment process, ... the company has faced disruptive and damaging protests," the firm [said in a statement](#).

On Sunday, about 40 members of the Tahltan First Nation, including elders, moved into the Fortune's camp site at Mount Klappan and asked the workers to leave.

Tahltan members had earlier issued what they called an "eviction notice, requiring the company to halt its exploration activities and leave the area," said a news release issued by the Tahltan Central Council on Tuesday.

As reported [exclusively on Stockhouse.com](#) on August 23, Tahltan elders are protesting at the Fortune site by, among other things, holding drum circles near Fortune's field camp twice a day, while Fortune representatives offered to change a helicopter route that was alleged to have disturbed traditional hunting grounds.

Fortune is proposing an open pit coal mine for the site that First Nations call the Sacred Headwaters, an area aboriginals say is of significant cultural value and feeds three major salmon-bearing rivers: the Skeena, the Stikine and the Nass rivers.

The mine in question, the Arctos Anthracite project, located 330 kilometres northeast of the Port of Prince Rupert, is an international collaboration between Fortune (80%) and POSCAN (20%), the Canadian subsidiary of South Korea's POSCO, one of the world's largest steel producers.

To date Fortune has invested \$100 million in the proposed project, which executives say has the potential for \$10 billion in revenue and \$900 million in Provincial and Federal taxes after a 25-year mine life.

Over the weekend, B.C. Mines Minister Bill Bennett travelled to the remote site, located several hundred kilometres north of Terrace in northeast B.C.

Bennett told protesters he would urge Fortune Minerals not to seek an injunction against them.

He also apologized for the wording of [a B.C. government news release](#) issued last week which angered the Tahltan, who said it implied a newly-appointed mediator had no choice but to ensure the mine is built, even though aboriginals want protection of the area.

Fortune president and CEO Robin Goad said the company pulled out to give time and space needed for discussions, but Fortune is still fully committed to move forward on the project.

"It is our sincere hope that this show of good faith by Fortune will help bring resolution to issues as and near our Arctos project site, including any protests," Goad said.

Annita McPhee, Tahltan Central Council president, said they have made it clear that they don't want the mine in that area.

"We don't want another 2005," she said in a news release.

"Our people are getting angrier by the day and negotiations are not progressing as the same pace."

In 2005, 15 people were arrested in a protest against the Shell Canada Ltd. (TSX:T.SHC, Stock Forum) shale gas development in the same area.

The B.C. government announced a deal last December with Shell Canada that saw the company withdraw plans to explore and drill for coalbed methane gas in the 4,000-square-kilometre region. (The Canadian Press, CFTK).

*With file by Lizzy Walters, Stockhouse.com*

## Dolly giving native kids books: Her foundation shipping them to 55 Manitoba First Nations

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

September 25, 2013

Bill Redekop



*Karen Davis reads a book to Maddie Amoyette, 4. Dolly Parton created a literacy foundation that sends books to kids. BILL REDEKOP / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS ARCHIVES*

A charitable literacy foundation run by country music legend Dolly Parton is set to begin mailing books monthly -- at no cost -- to up to 10,000 aboriginal children across Manitoba.



The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is to announce today in Winnipeg a program that will ship books monthly for children from birth to age five on 55 Manitoba First Nations. Its goal is to eventually include all 63 Manitoba First Nations.

*Dolly Parton (THE DOLLYWOOD FOUNDATION PHOTO)*

The announcement follows nearly five years of planning and organization by Parton's foundation and Manitoba representatives. In the last two years alone, the president of Parton's foundation has travelled to Winnipeg nine times to co-ordinate local efforts.

Manitoba's leader in the program is early child development worker Karen Davis of Ebb and Flow First Nation.



In 2009, Davis opened Manitoba's first Dolly Parton Imagination Library in the city of Dauphin and the RM of Dauphin. She later started Imagination Libraries in 15 Manitoba First Nations, always saying her goal was to put the child-literacy program in every Manitoba native community.

Earlier this year, Davis, an Ojibiwa, was honoured for her work with a Diamond Jubilee Medal from the Governor General. She returned the medal to protest the Harper government's policies toward aboriginals.

'I want every child in a First Nation to start school with the enthusiasm where they can say, "I can read. I know how to hold a book. My parents read to me" '

-- early child development worker Karen Davis of Ebb and Flow First Nation

"I want every child in a First Nation to start school with the enthusiasm where they can say, 'I can read. I know how to hold a book. My parents read to me,' " Davis said when asked about her hopes for the program.

"I just want every kid to walk up to the teacher and say, 'I love to read,' and not go to the library and pick up a book and hold it upside down. That would break my heart."

Today's announcement coincides with national Raise-a-Reader Day.

The first book newborns receive from the Imagination Library is *The Little Engine That Could*, with a thank-you letter to the parents from the country music singer. The last book, when the child turns five, is *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come*. That book contains another letter from Parton, but addressed to the child. The program will be customized to include aboriginal culture in many of the books.

Parton started the charitable foundation in honour of her parents, who never learned to read or write. Her foundation now mails books to 700,000 children every month in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

David Dotson, president of the Dollywood Foundation, based in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., said the Manitoba project isn't the organization's biggest, but it has been the most complex to set up, partly because there has been no federal or provincial assistance.

Why launch such a large program in Manitoba? Dotson credited Davis. "She's been a firecracker for us for a long time," he said, recalling how she walked into his Tennessee office one day and said she wanted to start the program in Manitoba. Davis was in Nashville, Tenn., at the time to see aboriginal hockey player Jordin Tootoo play for the Nashville Predators of the NHL.

"Karen's a special person and you really build things around special people," said Dotson, scheduled to arrive in Winnipeg Tuesday night. He said Davis volunteered tremendous amounts of time and energy for the program and in recent months has been working for the foundation on contract.

Davis has been a tireless fundraiser and has commitments for about \$700,000 so far. The biggest contributor is the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, which has put up \$150,000. The Frontier School Division, with a dozen schools in First Nations communities, is putting up nearly \$90,000. The Winnipeg Foundation has committed about \$40,000.

The Dollywood Foundation covers staffing and travel and co-ordinates shipments from a database. It is able to purchase titles at huge discounts in its agreement with Penguin Books because it buys in such huge volumes.

About \$250,000 is still needed to sign up the last eight Manitoba First Nations for the program, including Peguis, Nelson House, Sandy Bay, Long Plain, Sioux Valley, Lake St. Martin, Chemawawin, and Opaskwayak. Davis said she is in discussions with a major financial institution to help with the cost, but nothing is definite yet.

The program will ship books as far north as Sayisi Dene First Nation at Tadoule Lake, reachable only by plane, dog team, snowmobile or canoe. The Imagination Library seemed like a solution, said Davis, because "everyone gets mail some way, somehow."

"We don't have libraries, and Northern Stores don't sell books. We have very few resources that focus on the child's early years," she said.

She said the program's aim is also about involving parents in their child's education and not just leaving it to schools. Getting parents to read to their children is a big step. "I want parents to embrace these little minds and to know that from the start to age five is a crucial time in the children's lives," she said.

The Imagination Library ships about 200,000 books a month within Parton's home state of Tennessee, where local and state governments provide much of the funding. It also has a large program in Detroit, Mich., totalling 32,000 books per month. Its largest program outside the U.S. is near Yorkshire, England, where 14,000 books a month are shipped.

Parton will address the Manitoba program in a taped video to be played at today's news conference.

Davis, who has met Parton twice, once in Winnipeg and once in Nashville, said the retail value of the books to 55 First Nations over five years is about \$10 million.

## Northern grand chief weighs in on aboriginal CFS debate

[CBC News](#)

Sep 24, 2013 5:26 PM



Aboriginal children who were raised by non-aboriginal adoptive families face challenges as adults in finding their cultural identity, says a Manitoba First Nation leader.

Grand Chief David Harper of Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak (MKO), which represents northern chiefs in the province, says he has heard stories of aboriginal children being placed with non-aboriginal families during a period called the "'60s scoop."

"They picked up these children years ago and we don't even know where they are," he said Tuesday.

"Half of them, most of them came back, but there's still children out there that do not know who their true mother is."

Harper said he cannot comment on the specifics of a legal case involving a Winnipeg couple and an agency under the Métis Child and Family Services Authority over the long-term placement of a 2½-year-old boy, but he spoke generally on the issue of aboriginal children in care.

The foster parents told CBC News they were told they cannot adopt the boy, who they have had in their care for nearly two years, because they are Filipino and child-

welfare officials believe the part-Métis child should be placed with a more "culturally appropriate" Métis adoptive family.

- [Filipino parents fight to keep part-Métis foster child](#)

The child's permanent guardian is an agency under the Métis Child and Family Services Authority.

The foster parents, as well as the child's biological mother, have argued that a bond has developed between the couple and the toddler, and that should be a bigger factor than one part of his cultural background.

But the Métis Child and Family Services Authority has said if the primary caregiver identifies as Métis, its mandate is to place the child in a Métis home long-term.

Authority CEO Billie Schibler told CBC News that officials want to do what they believe is in the children's best interests, as well as preserve Métis culture and families.

Schibler also noted that from the 1960s to the early 1980s, thousands of aboriginal children were placed with non-aboriginal families as part of the '60s scoop.

While Harper defends the right of a child and family services authority to place children where it believes is best, he said communities also need to devote more resources into keeping children out of the foster care system in the first place.

"Where there's no running water, where there's overcrowding, of course government will say, 'No ... that's not an appropriate home for a child to be raised at.' But in the meantime, we're shipping children to urban centres," he said.

When children do end up in care, Harper said it's important that foster families help children stay connected to their cultures.

The General Manitoba CFS Authority says it offers classes to help families connect foster children with their cultures, and staff do place children in culturally appropriate homes when available.

Rage and the rise of street gangs: Inner-city poverty and racialism drove young aboriginals into gangs

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

September 25, 2013



*A police officer collects evidence from the scene of suspected gang violence in the inner city. JOE BRYKSA / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS ARCHIVES*

*The following is a summary of **Indians Wear Red: Aboriginal Street Gangs in Winnipeg**, by Elizabeth Comack, Lawrence Deane, Larry Morrisette and Jim Silver, published by Fernwood Publishing and due to be launched at 7 p.m. Thursday at McNally Robinson Booksellers.*

They were kids when they started. Teenagers locked up in the youth-detention centre, watching movies about American street gangs. Soon they realized that if they stood up for each other, and worked together, it was easier to survive. They said, "Hey, maybe we should form a gang, just like in the movies." Soon they had a name and insignias. "What colour should our rags be?" That's obvious, one said: "Indians wear red!"

Once they were a gang, they weren't pushed around as much. They resisted. They had power. It felt good. Little else had felt good in their lives.

Aboriginal street gangs have grown in the racialized and colonized space that is Winnipeg's North End. The Main Street Rattlers were first, in the early 1980s. Supplied by a biker gang, the Rattlers were assigned a part of north Main Street to deal drugs.

The Indian Posse emerged soon after, followed by a host of others -- Manitoba Warriors, Native Syndicate, and today many smaller crews.



Why did these aboriginal street gangs form?

A full answer requires going back in time. In myriad ways -- healthy and independent communities pushed off their traditional lands; children forcibly removed from their families and confined in residential schools, for example -- aboriginal families have been undermined. Much of this was part of a conscious and deliberate colonial strategy. Many suffered lasting damage. People were traumatized. The trauma trails produce all manner of issues -- including street gangs. We reap what we sow.

Growing up in the harsh poverty of Winnipeg's North End, in many cases left to fend for themselves from a young age, aboriginal youngsters fight to survive. Joining a street gang can be seen as a form of resistance -- a refusal to accept the endless racism, the racialized poverty with all its indignities.

We interviewed senior members of aboriginal street gangs over a three-year period. It was a deeply emotional and frequently troubling experience. These men have done some terrible things. Yet most are smart and started their lives full of potential. Born white, in suburban Winnipeg, they would have been teachers, carpenters, architects or business managers. Born aboriginal, in the colonized space that is the North End, their "normal" was something quite different.

All became involved with petty crime and then increasingly serious crimes from a surprisingly young age -- 10, 11 or 12 years. In many cases they had to, in order to survive, to eat. Soon they joined forces with other youngsters in similar circumstances. This happened on the streets, and in lock-ups. Street gangs were formed. Illegal activities -- especially the trade in illegal drugs -- became their livelihood. They dealt drugs at an age when most kids are in elementary school. Some became very skilled -- entrepreneurial, business-like, able to manage people and money and seize new profit-making opportunities. They have been frequently imprisoned, but it's no big deal -- it's part of their "normal," part of the cost of doing business.

Many youngsters aspire to being locked up. It gives them "street cred." It's a way of moving up in the street gang hierarchy. It's no deterrent.

Where does involvement in the street gang lead?

It ends badly for most gang members. The life -- the danger, stress, lack of security, and violence that is an integral part of the street gang's business strategy -- takes its toll. By their 30s and 40s they're done -- broke, no education, a long rap sheet, no connections with mainstream society, and no means of making a living other than crime. They go full circle, ending where they started -- poor, reviled and excluded by mainstream society, just as they were when they were kids.

These men are the product of the colonialism that is a central part of Canada's history. They are a product of the deeply entrenched, racialized poverty of Winnipeg's inner city. They are angry, and who could blame them?

Yet their justifiable anger, their resistance to the hand that life has dealt them, produces only more grief, for themselves and their communities.

How do we respond? We spend token amounts on isolated, short-lived anti-gang programs. Some programs save this man, or that man, from a life of crime. But for each person who finds a way forward, many more youngsters join a street gang, enticed by the money and prestige they believe will follow. For some, this does happen. For a while. But soon they're locked up -- we continue as a society to act on the misplaced belief that locking youngsters up will solve the problems -- and within a decade or two most are worn out, ground down, wasted. The glory and the money are short-lived; the damage goes on.

As one said: "I don't know anybody in this lifestyle that's actually succeeded... I don't know any retired drug dealers that have money... There is no dental, there is no pension, there's nothing."

What should we do?

There is no simple or quick solution. The roots of this problem have grown in our midst for decades. No "program" with two-year funding will suffice. Based on our multiple interviews with street gang members, women who have been part of their lives, and elders whose wisdom is deep, we believe the solution requires a different path.

It requires listening to aboriginal people, acknowledging what has been done to them, understanding the consequences of that damage and of the racialized poverty in which so many now live, and following their advice about how to move forward -- in a way that includes all of us.

We can choose to take these steps. Or we can continue down the ill-advised path we are now on. As a society, it's our responsibility to make the right choice.

### **First Nations must speak for themselves, nuclear hearing told:**

OPG relied too heavily on Kincardine council's support, federal panel told

[Toronto Star](#)

September 25, 2013

John Spears

Ontario Power Generation relied too much on the support of Kincardine town council when the company decided to bury nuclear waste near the town, First Nations representatives told a federal panel Wednesday.

"To this point I must be absolutely clear," Chief Randall Kahgee of the Saugeen Ojibway Nations (SON) told the panel.

"Kincardine cannot speak for us or our territory in these matters. We must speak for ourselves, and this must be recognized not only by OPG, but by governments as well."

OPG has now promised that it won't proceed with the nuclear waste project without SON's support.

OPG proposes to bury low and intermediate level nuclear waste in 31 caverns, each 250 metres long, excavated in limestone 680 metres below the surface on the grounds of the Bruce nuclear station. The construction cost is estimated at \$1 billion

The waste would not include spent fuel, but some of the intermediate waste — which makes up about 20 per cent of the volume — would remain highly radioactive for many thousands of years.

Kahgee said Kincardine's acceptance of the project isn't binding on his people.

"Radiation does not respect town lines," he said.

"Our people are being asked to accept this project in the heart of our territory, and to accept the risk of the project forever."

The panel has a tight, four-week schedule for hearing submissions on the project, and Kahgee warned that the process can't be hurried.

"If we do not proceed thoughtfully and with care and caution, we will only shift our burden to future generations and subject them to permanent risk," he said.

"As I have said, this is a forever project, and we have an obligation to our future generations to get it right."

Kahgee said the SON is working to re-establish a fishery, and is highly dependent on tourism. It leases 1,700 vacation properties, and operates a campground, he said.

Both those enterprises could be badly stigmatized if the public isn't persuaded that the nuclear waste site is safe, he said.

OPG has said that the site may be used to hold the waste from the Pickering nuclear station, once it is closed and dismantled.

"This represents a very significant change in the scope of this project," said SON lawyer Alex Monem.

"It is not the basis on which OPG conducted its public engagement, including its engagement with SON."

"Central aspects" of how an enlarged site might operate, and what kind of waste it would handle, would be left to be clarified later, he said.

"The approach we're being asked to accept is to permit the deferral of these key issues to subsequent stages of development and subsequent regulatory proceedings," he said.

That could lead to a project in which builders have to manage risks as they arise, instead of planning to avoid them altogether, he said.

Monem also said OPG's plan doesn't deal with the risks of transporting waste to the site. OPG has been trucking low and intermediate level radioactive waste to a surface storage area on the Bruce site from its Pickering and Darlington nuclear stations for decades.

Joe Heil, OPG's director of First Nations and Métis, said the company is developing an "evolutionary process" for working with SON.

"We're committed to building a strong, trusting relationship," he told the panel.

The hearings are slated to continue through the end of next week in Kincardine, Ont., and then conclude after a week's hearings in Saugeen Shores.

## Four-part doc series hopes to create a safer community

[Wawatay News](#)

September 25, 2013

Told from the perspectives of a broad range of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, a four-part educational documentary series hopes to open up the dialogue about what it is like to live as an First Nations person in the Thunder Bay region.

The Walk-A-Mile film project is being developed to break down barriers, help celebrate resiliency, challenge stereotypes, strengthen community relations, create a safer and more understanding community, educate peoples and create an

opportunity for people to decide what needs to be said and heard about aboriginal people.

Michelle Derosier, from Eagle Lake, is an award-winning filmmaker who founded her own company Thunderstone Pictures. She teamed up with the City of Thunder Bay Aboriginal Liaison Unit and Imaginarium Video Production Studio to create a four-part, 10-minute documentary series.

"There are lots we have to learn and there is lots we are just touching the surface on," said Derosier. "There are countless issues, problems and stories to be told."

Derosier holds a master of social work degree and worked on the front lines for 12 years. About eight years ago she decided it was time to make a career change. She knew the importance of images and media but wasn't too sure in what direction she should take. After she met her business partner Dave Clement they decided to exclusively tell Aboriginal stories and in 2006 she wrote and co-directed a documentary Seeking Bimaadiziwin.

"I had experienced many, many powerful moving and thought provoking and amazing things while filming from that first experience and I went from there," she said.

Desosier has gone on to create numerous award-winning projects. She has worked with the City of Thunder Bay Aboriginal Liaison Unit for a number of years particularly with city clerk, John Hannam. They both attended a Nishnawebe Aski Nation (NAN) safety conference in January when an idea began to blossom.

"It's not about community safety but it is and it's not necessarily about one particular issue but it is, so it's about all of them and it's very big," said Derosiers. They concluded the best way to open up a dialogue and create understanding was to story tell through a documentary.

"I have seen how if you tell somebody a story about something they didn't know, if they had stereotypes or misconceptions about somebody or an issue, if they hear a story that is the truth, you can start to see change happen," she said. "It's not quite that simple, but sometimes it does change people, their attitude, the way they treat a person and how they look at their neighbor. With this project we want to at least change one person's perception about their neighbor."

Derosiers wants to be respectful in the process of this project. However, she doesn't want to shy away from difficult topics. The purpose of creating four 10-minute documentaries is to allow different agencies to use the series at various presentations like a one-hour lunch or in schools for training.



As a community project one of the goals is to ensure the subjects talk about what they feel. "It's not what I think or not what the city or Aboriginal liaison thinks needs to be in this, but it's what the subjects think needs to be in it," she said.

The series will be a tool for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and various agencies for helping strengthen community ties and healthier communities.

The Walk-A-Mile Film series will be presented on Feb. 6 at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium. To share your story contact Michelle Desosier of Thunderstone Pictures, visit [michelle@thunderstonepictures.com](mailto:michelle@thunderstonepictures.com) or call 1-807-707-2504.

## Defying the odds: Paralyzed Aboriginal filmmaker screens at Hot Docs Cinema with first film

### [Toronto Star](#)

September 26, 2013

Barbara Turnbull

Ordinary Woman, Extraordinary Dreams chronicles Maggie Sofea's visit to Summer Beaver, the First Nations home she had to leave when she sustained spinal cord injury.



*Maggie Sofea, 24, with some of the team that made it possible to visit Summer Beaver and make a documentary about the trip. The remote reserve in Northwestern Ontario is where she broke her neck.*

For a student in her final year of film production at Confederation College in Thunder Bay, Maggie Sofea is doing well to be screening her first documentary at Toronto's [Hot Docs Cinema](#).

What makes the Aboriginal filmmaker's achievement even more notable is that she's been living as a quadriplegic, far from her home and people in Northwestern Ontario, since a diving accident at age 11.

Now 24, Sofea's fulfilling her own wishes — hence her film's title *Ordinary Woman, Extraordinary Dreams*. The film documents Sofea's spinal cord injury and her return visit to her home in Summer Beaver, on a remote First Nations reserve. She reclaims her cultural identity, where her heart has never left.

The 90-minute film runs Monday, Sept. 30, at 6 p.m., followed by a discussion with Sofea and her collaborating director, Jim Hyder. She was also a co-writer on the project.

"I wanted to reflect on that place which changed my whole life," Sofea says in a telephone interview from Thunder Bay, referring not only to the remote community where she spent her first 11 years, but an isolated campsite, a further one-hour boat ride away. That's where she hit her head on a boulder diving into shallow water.

"(The trip) brought me a lot of memories of living with my family and relatives," Sofea says. "That gives me hope to live on." One of those hopes is to eventually make the visit — a richly healing reunion which took place in August of 2012 — an annual occurrence.

After initial medical treatment in Winnipeg, Sofea had to relocate to Thunder Bay. Her parents moved with her, though she now lives independently in an apartment, supported by attendants.

Since her injury, it has not been possible for her to live in Summer Beaver. The revered land provides her people with much, but accessibility isn't among the riches.

"Logistics were extraordinary," Hyder says of her visit. A chartered plane and an all-terrain wheelchair, with four caregivers, were needed.

Maggie's story calls attention to the challenges faced by those living with physical disabilities in these First Nations communities.

It was for people such as her that [Spinal Cord Injury Ontario](#) set up a Thunder Bay branch five years ago, says CEO Bill Adair. The organization helped Sofea pursue an education and set up life independently. They also helped make the journey possible, with a pre-visit to Summer Beaver to help make a plan, Adair says. Darren Lillington, the regional services co-ordinator, made the trip again with Sofea.

Since her accident, seven of her cousins have taken their own lives, including the one who pulled her out of the water. The film captures some of the emotional tributes to the people who died in her absence. There is a memorial for a group killed in a small plane crash.

Sofea wants to serve as a role model to others, and make documentaries to help her community.

"I know now that I can come back here and be here with my family on the land I miss so much," Sofea narrates in the film. "After facing all the challenges to get here, with the help of the people who care about me and support me, I know I can accomplish anything in the world."

*Tickets are \$15 plus HST and can be ordered online through <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/456261> or contact: [tickets@skyworksfoundation.org](mailto:tickets@skyworksfoundation.org) or call: 416-536-6581.*

## Prince Albert schools infused with First Nations culture

[Prince Albert Herald](#)

September 25, 2013

Tyler Clarke

While First Nations bands across the province fight for their own uniquely tailored education acts for schools on reserve, educators within city schools continue to work on First Nations and Métis programming.



*© Government of Saskatchewan image*

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education logo is seen in a screenshot.

Although they operate on a multicultural framework, Saskatchewan Rivers School Division superintendent John Schultz said that since about half

their students are of First Nations or Métis ancestry, it makes sense their culture sees special focus.

"It's an obvious thing that we'd make sure we have very authentic, organized outcomes that make sense for our students that are First Nations and Métis," he said.

"We want to make sure that students, no matter where they come from, have the same opportunities."

Sharing an office at school division headquarters, Linda Greyeyes Highway and Tracy Bloomquist make up the nerve centre of First Nations programming throughout the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division.

As the division's integrated learning consultant, Bloomquist's key mission is to infuse First Nations and Métis perspective throughout the division's curriculum

Serving as an aboriginal consultant, Highway is focused on partnerships, cultural programming and networking.

On the partnerships front, she cites last year's signing of a memorandum of understanding with Muskoday First Nation as a recent success story.

"A lot of the Muskoday students end up coming to our high schools because their school is K-9," she said, noting that this transition might feel jarring to some students -- a transition they aim to smooth out as much as possible by offering culturally relevant programming.

"All kids come to school with strengths, and as a school division we need to acknowledge and respect the strengths that a student comes with," she said.

In order to get the best out of students, they need a positive sense of identity and their cultural needs met, she said.

"The end goal is always to make sure the child's needs are being met," she summarized.

There are too many First Nations and Métis cultural programs to list, Schultz said, citing last year's treaty fair at Riverside School for Grade 7 students throughout the city as perhaps the most publicly visible effort.

The division is also striving for a representative workforce, wherein there's a healthy portion First Nations and Métis educators within the faculty.

It's an obvious thing that we'd make sure we have very authentic, organized outcomes that make sense for our students that are First Nations and Métis. John Schultz

"We're working at it," Schultz said, adding that it's important for students to have positive role models of their own cultural background.

"If you get people teaching that are of the culture you're trying to serve, that makes some sense," he concluded.

A recent mentorship program has helped on this front, Highway said, noting that about half of the 10 mentors spread through Saskatchewan Rivers School Division high schools are of First Nations or Métis ancestry.

One of these mentors, Wilma Felix, is known as the kokum of the group, she said.

"She has a really big network of cultural people, as well -- traditional people she can call on should the school need it," Highway said.

Having elders come into the schools have proven a very effective means of sharing and celebrating aboriginal culture, she said, noting that they are a key source of traditional knowledge.

"The elders are the ones who carry our history," Highway said, adding that without elders, they'd be "Indian people with no direction."

Adhering to the provincial curriculum, Lorel Trumier said that all schools within the Prince Albert Catholic School Division use the "We are all Treaty People" program for Grades 1 to 8.

"Throughout the curriculum it's woven into the curriculum and there are elements at each grade level," the director of education said.

In addition to weaving First Nations and Métis teachings throughout the curriculum, the division has elective classes on First Nations languages and a high school elective on First Nations studies.

All First Nations and Métis programming within each school division is available to all students, regardless of race.

Better understanding of the cultures of those around you helps nip racism in the bud, Highway said.

"Canada -- this is First Nation land. This is First Nation country," she said.

"It's very important that aboriginal people and non aboriginal people -- we learn each other's history and why things have happened."

## Erotic aboriginal art show celebrates native sexuality: Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art exhibit opens Wednesday

[CBC News](#)

Sep 25, 2013 11:09 PM ET



A new art exhibition celebrating native erotica opens in Vancouver Wednesday night.

"There is a lot of eroticism, but it's just never seen very often outside of our community and even behind closed doors," said co-curator Kwiaahwah Jones.

The exhibition includes woven pieces of clothing, suggestive carvings and two traditional headdresses, which were used to shame a cheating spouse.

Jones and her co-curator, Haida artist Gwaai Edenshaw, say that part of the reason for the exhibit is to have a bit of a laugh about sexuality.  
RezErect: Native Erotica is located at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art and is open Wednesday to Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Water, water everywhere

[UBC News](#)

September 25, 2013

Heather Amos



*First Nations high school students came to UBC to learn about engineering and water treatment.*

UBC engineers are working with small communities to improve access to clean water

Two or three times a year, when the snow melts or the rain comes, Jim Brown has to issue a boil water advisory to friends, family and community. For some homes, the advisory is never lifted – their drinking water constantly tests high in bacteria and positive for *E. coli*.

More than five million Canadians do not have access to a reliable source of clean drinking water. Many of these individuals live in rural or First Nations communities.

"It used to be three homes and you're eligible for a community water system but now we have to have five homes," says Brown who as maintenance manager and supervisor for the Lytton First Nation oversees the community's water systems, among other things. "Lytton First Nation has 56 reserves and 14 of these reserves are not under a community water system."



When there is a boil water advisory, bottled water has to be provided. People like Brown, who live and work with the problem, understand the issue's complexity. Cost, policy, system design and cultural values all factor into the equation.

These factors are something that Madjid Mohseni, a professor in UBC's Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, has been learning about for the last five years. In 2008, he and a team of partners from across Canada landed a \$5.2-million Strategic Network Grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and founded [RES'EAU-WaterNET](#), an organization working to develop innovative water treatment technologies for small, rural and First Nations communities.

But instead of focusing on the technology – something Mohseni excels at as an engineer – he's been working with communities to understand the root of the issues.

### Building relationships

"Technology isn't the barrier," says Ted Molyneux, a senior water and wastewater engineer with the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). "They have to understand the other issues – affordability, awareness, governance, water safety plans and implementation."

Molyneux and colleague Danny Highashitani, both UBC engineering alumni, helped connect Mohseni and his team with water operators, the individuals who work on water systems in First Nations communities.

"If they were going to be successful, they needed First Nations participating in the research that they were doing," says Higashitani, Senior Engineer, Asset Management with AANDC.

Through a grant from the Peter Wall Solutions Initiative at UBC, Mohseni began building relationships with three B.C. First Nations. He and RES'EAU graduate students visited Lytton First Nation, checked out the systems that are currently being used and met the operators on Brown's team.

### Trying to find workable solutions

One of the biggest challenges is balancing access to clean water with cost. Many homes are located far away from towns or cities and sometimes even far apart from one another.

If you only have a few homes drawing water from the same place, how big and complex a system should you create? Is there a way to guarantee the water is safe without adding chlorine to it? Where should the water be treated – immediately



after it comes out of the source or as it is coming out of a tap in a home? And who then is responsible for checking, maintaining and repairing the system?

This fall, Mohseni and the RES'EAU team hope to begin piloting some of the first designs in three communities in B.C. and Ontario. Mohseni is considering ultraviolet technology, called Vacuum UV, or VUV, that uses short wavelengths of photons, which oxidize and degrade nearly all contaminants in water.

"At this wavelength, water molecules absorb the UV and generate the oxidants," says Mohseni. "It inactivates pathogens and degrades organic materials."

Mohseni has received a second round of funding from NSERC and further support from partners. The funding will be used to pilot these technologies, build relationships with more communities, and expand the RES'EAU program to the point where boil water advisories are a thing of the past.

"Ninety-five per cent of First Nations communities are remotely located and there is a big need to find water systems that will work," he says. "The public health and economic impacts of not being able to safely drink the water coming out of your kitchen tap are significant."

## Working in the community

### Water sampling research

RES'EAU and community water operators have established a water sampling campaign. Operators collect and record water samples from their water source throughout the year. This helps develop an understanding of the water quality variations over time and helps design an approach to the water treatment system. For Brown, this project has provided other useful information. As more and more resource extraction projects move ahead in the region, Brown is worried that the water quality will drop. Now they have the data to compare with.

### Youth Summer Camp

This summer, Mohseni launched a one-week youth summer camp for Aboriginal high school students. The students travelled from their communities to UBC and spent a week learning about the field of engineering and water treatment in the hopes of encouraging them to consider engineering as an option for their post-secondary education.

### Conference

AANDC, Brown and Mohseni all stressed that water operators play a critical role in their communities. They felt there needed to be more opportunities for them to

exchange ideas with engineers, researchers and each other as well as more opportunities for communities to recognize their work. On Oct. 2, 150 First Nation community operators and researchers are gathering in Vancouver for the RES'EAU IMPACT 2013 conference.

Find other stories about: [Dept. of Chemical and Biological Engineering](#), [First Nations](#), [Madjid Mohseni](#)

## **Federal officials, First Nations meet on pipelines, energy concerns**

[Canada First Perspective](#)

26 September 2013 14:39

First Nations leaders and representatives of the federal government are meeting Tuesday in Vancouver to discuss aboriginal concerns over the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline and other energy projects in Western Canada.

The meeting was arranged earlier this month to give top bureaucrats from seven federal departments an opportunity to hear First Nations' views on energy and infrastructure projects.

Aboriginal representatives include Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit and Jody Wilson-Raybould of the Assembly of First Nations.

The meeting comes after the Conservative government's point man on First Nations and energy issues in Western Canada reportedly told Prime Minister Stephen Harper that aboriginal negotiations were not going well.

Vancouver lawyer Doug Eyford has been travelling to First Nations communities across Western Canada and will deliver a final report on his findings by the end of November.

The invitation to Tuesday's meeting says it is not meant to replace the federal government's legal obligation to consult Aboriginal Peoples about actions that may impact their treaty rights.